Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Advisory Committee Meeting

Pursuant to the provisions of section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. No. 92–463), notice is hereby given of the following committee meeting:

Name: Federal Grain Inspection Service Advisory Committee.

Date: May 10–11, 1995.

Place: Double Tree Hotel, Kansas City Airport, 8801 112th Street, N.W., Kansas City, MO.

Time: 8:30 a.m. May 10 and May 11.

Purpose: To provide advice to the Administrator of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) with respect to the implementation of the U.S. Grain Standards Act.

The agenda includes: (1) Financial status of Agency, (2) Wheat Classification, (3) Test weight per bushel as a quality measurement for Soft Red Winter Wheat, (4) Standardization of Commercial Inspection Equipment, (5) Promoting competition between Official Agencies, (6) On-Line/At-Line Inspections, (7) Implementation of New Moisture Meter, (8) ERS Soybean Cleaning Study, and (9) other matters.

The meeting will be open to the public. Public participation will be limited to written statements, unless permission is received from the Committee Chairman to orally address the Committee. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee or submit written statements before or after the meeting, should contact the Administrator, GIPSA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 96454, Washington, D.C. 20090–6454, telephone (202) 720–0219 or FAX (202) 205–9237.

Dated: April 12, 1995.

Calvin W. Watkins,

Acting Administrator.

[FR Doc. 95–9507 Filed 4–17–95; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 040795A]

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Notice of Availability of a Proposed Recovery Plan for Review and Comment; Public Hearings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability; public hearings.

SUMMARY: NMFS has developed its Proposed Recovery Plan for the Snake River sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*), Snake River fall chinook salmon, and Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*). It is available upon request. NMFS seeks public comment and has scheduled 11 public hearings on this Proposed Recovery Plan.

DATES: Comments on the Proposed Recovery Plan must be received by July 17, 1995, if they are to be considered during preparation of a final recovery plan. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for dates and times of public hearings.

ADDRESSES: Requests for a copy of the Proposed Recovery Plan should be addressed to Recovery Plan Coordinator, National Marine Fisheries Service, 525 NE Oregon Street, Portland, OR 97232 telephone: 503–230–5400. Written comments and materials regarding the Proposed Recovery Plan should be directed to the same address. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for locations of public hearings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Jones, Recovery Plan Coordinator, (503–230–5420).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Salmon are culturally, economically, and symbolically important to the Pacific Northwest. Columbia River chinook populations were at one time acknowledged to be the largest in the world. Prior to the 1960's, the Snake River was the most important drainage in the Columbia River system for producing salmon. But in the 1990's, Snake River salmon struggle to exist. Snake River salmon have declined to such low levels that protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) is needed to prevent their extinction (56 FR 58619, November 20, 1991; 57 FR 14653, April 22, 1992; 59 FR 42529, August 18, 1994; and 59 FR 66784, December 28, 1994). In the 1800's, there were approximately 1.5 million Snake River chinook salmon; by 1994, only 1,800 adults returned to the Snake River. Snake River fall chinook salmon numbered over 72,000 50 years ago, but only 400 adults were counted at Lower Granite Dam in 1994. As many as 4,400 Snake River sockeye salmon could be found 40 years ago, but last year only one returned to Redfish Lake.

The ESA requires that the agency responsible for a listed species develop and implement a recovery plan for its conservation (defined by the ESA as recovery to delisting) and survival, unless it is determined that such a plan will not promote the conservation of the species. Accordingly, NMFS appointed the Snake River Salmon Recovery Team (Team) to assist in the development of the recovery plan for the Snake River salmon. In May 1994, the Team submitted its final recommendations to NMFS. NMFS used these recommendations to formulate the Proposed Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan.

The conservation of natural salmon and their habitat has not been afforded balanced consideration in past resource allocation decisions. Natural salmon are those that are the progeny of naturally spawning parents. Development in the Pacific Northwest has often proceeded with the assumption that improved technology or management would mitigate impacts on natural salmon stocks. The Region's reliance on uncertain mitigation schemes (as opposed to fundamental conservation strategies) has been a very costly approach, both for natural salmon and the public.

However, recent efforts have concentrated on conserving natural salmon and their habitats. There is new emphasis being placed on natural fish escapement, improved migration conditions for juveniles and adults, increased riparian area protection, and equitable consideration of natural fish in resource allocation processes. This focus differs from previous management and represents important progress

toward recovering listed Snake River salmon, restoring Columbia Basin ecosystem health, and benefiting other species presently in serious decline.

Summary of the Proposed Recovery Plan

The goal of the Proposed Recovery Plan is to restore the health of the Columbia and Snake River ecosystem and to recover listed Snake River salmon stocks. Many of the recommended actions will directly benefit other species such as other salmon stocks, sturgeon, and bull trout. Implementation of the Proposed Recovery Plan should also conserve biodiversity, a factor that is essential to ecosystem integrity and stability. Many of the actions in the Proposed Recovery Plan have been used to formulate reasonable and prudent measures in current section 7 consultations.

The Proposed Recovery Plan discusses the natural history and current status of Snake River salmon. It also addresses known and potential human impacts, and displays the costs directly attributable to recovery. In addition, the Proposed Recovery Plan identifies delisting criteria and biological objectives, and proposes the tasks required to meet them. Tasks are identified in the areas of institutional structure, tributary ecosystem, mainstem and estuarine ecosystem, harvest management, and artificial propagation.

NMFS' approach to Snake River salmon recovery places highest priority on ameliorating the primary factors for the species' decline and eliminating existing impediments to recovery. The Plan does this by proposing actions that offer immediate benefits, and refining those actions over time to ensure the most efficient use of limited resources. This strategy incorporates an adaptive management process; it allows actions to be added, deleted, or refined as important scientific information and analyses becomes available.

Institutional Structure

NMFS believes (as did the Team) that an improved decision-making process is necessary to restore Columbia Basin ecosystem health and ensure Snake River salmon recovery. Such a process will also protect and improve habitat through the adaptive management process, prevent further listings, and conserve other fish and wildlife. To achieve these goals, NMFS will appoint, convene, and chair a Recovery Implementation Team that will represent state, tribal, and Federal policy leaders and thereby ensure effective coordination, teamwork, and communication among all entities having responsibility for Snake River salmon recovery. To ensure that salmon recovery actions remain scientifically based, NMFS will also consider appointing and convening Scientific Advisory Panel and technical committees to provide scientific and technical support to the Recovery Implementation Team.

Delisting Criteria

The Team's and NMFS' recovery requirements and delisting criteria for ESA-listed Snake River Basin salmon are very similar and fall into two major categories: (1) Remedying the environmental (and other) factors that have reduced the stocks to levels that are in danger of extinction; and (2) rebuilding populations to levels where there is evidence of improved productivity, even when considering the potential impacts of severe stochastic environmental events (e.g., protracted drought, oceanic El Niño effects, etc.). Both of these categories must be achieved in order to consider delisting. To determine rebuilding levels above, NMFS proposes to use cohort replacement rates and numeric delisting criteria.

The cohort replacement rate describes the rate at which each subsequent cohort, or generation, replaces the previous one. When this rate is exactly 1.0, a population is neither increasing nor decreasing. If the ratio remains less than 1.0 for extended periods, a population is in decline, and could continue into extinction—a risk that led originally to listing Snake River salmon. For population rebuilding, the cohort replacement rate must be greater than 1. For delisting to be considered, the 8-year geometric mean cohort replacement rate of a listed species must exceed 1.0. For Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon, this goal must also be met for 80 percent of the index areas available for estimating cohort replacement rates.

For sockeye salmon, the numerical escapement goal is an 8-year (approximately two-generation) geometric mean of at least 1,000 natural spawners returning annually to Redfish Lake and 500 natural spawners in each of two other Snake River Basin lakes. The numerical escapement goal for Snake River fall chinook salmon is an 8-year geometric mean of at least 2,500 natural spawners in the mainstem Snake River annually. Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon have two numeric delisting criteria; both must be met for delisting to be considered. The first numerical escapement goal for Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon is an 8-year geometric mean corresponding to at least 60 percent of the pre–1971 brood year average redd counts for 80 percent of the available index areas. The second numerical escapement goal for spring/summer chinook salmon is an 8-year geometric mean equal to 60 percent of the 1962–67 brood year average count of natural spawners past Ice Harbor Dam (goal is equal to 31,440).

Tributary Ecosystem

Land and water management actions, including water withdrawals, unscreened water diversions, stream channelization, road construction, timber harvest, livestock grazing, mining, and outdoor recreation have degraded important salmon spawning and rearing habitats. To protect tributary ecosystem health, NMFS proposes a three-part approach: (1) Protect remaining high quality habitat by ceasing activities that would degrade ecosystem functions and values that listed fish need, (2) restore degraded habitats, and (3) provide connectivity between high quality habitats. Federal lands and Federal actions should bear, as much as possible, the burdens of recovering listed salmon species and their habitat. However, non-Federal lands constitute approximately 35 percent of the Snake River salmon critical habitat. Therefore, an ecosystem approach that emphasizes integrated Federal and non-Federal land management is needed. To achieve this, all stakeholders in a subbasin or watershed are encouraged to participate in management partnerships. The Proposed Recovery Plan also proposes actions that will reduce the loss of listed species at water withdrawal sites, rebuild salmon populations by providing adequate instream flows and improving fish passage at barriers, reduce losses of listed salmon associated with poor water quality, and reduce impacts on salmon resulting from recreational activities.

Mainstem and Estuarine Ecosystem

In the mainstem and estuarine ecosystem, salmon face problems associated with their downstream and upstream migrations. The journey through the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers has become more hazardous, since eight hydroelectric dams were built and their reservoirs created. Each dam delays juvenile fish in their transition to the ocean environment and exacts additional losses. Seventy percent of the 482 miles between the mouth of the Columbia River and Lewiston/Clarkston on the Snake River has been converted from free-flowing river into reservoirs. This change has

slowed the rate of downstream travel for smolts and increased the amount of habitat favorable to predator species. Hatchery fish and exotic species compete with and prey on the listed salmon in the mainstem ecosystem.

NMFS examined various approaches to improving the downstream survival of juvenile Snake River salmon (as well as that of other fish that migrate through the corridor). The actions considered include improving inriver and dam passage conditions, improving collection and transportation systems for juvenile migrants (especially under adverse river conditions), and drawing down reservoirs.

NMFS proposes to proceed on a long-term adaptive management approach that will depend upon a combination of improved inriver migration conditions, improved transportation, and major structural changes at dams. The Proposed Recovery Plan recommends a major decision point when sufficient adult survival information is available in 1999. In the interim, all necessary studies, planning, design, and environmental documentation for drawdowns should be completed. At the same time, inriver migration conditions should be improved to the maximum extent possible using techniques such as increased flows, increased spill, physical improvement of the dams, and aggressive surface bypass development and testing. Significant improvements should also be made in transportation operations. The overall approach is to proceed on a path that implements measures in the short term that are most likely to increase survival while at the same time enhancing our ability to isolate and address major causes of mortality in the future. The listed and unlisted fish also need improvements in their upstream passage conditions. To accomplish this, the Proposed Recovery Plan prescribes actions such as installing extended length screens, operating turbines at peak efficiency, extending the period during which the juvenile bypass system is in operation, implementing a gas abatement program, remedying water pollution problems, developing emergency auxiliary water supplies for adult fishways, and decreasing water temperatures.

To minimize predation and competition problems in the migration corridor, the Proposed Recovery Plan contains actions to control predation by squawfish, birds, marine mammals, and non-native fishes such as smallmouth bass, walleye, and channel catfish. Measures are also proposed to reduce American shad populations in the Columbia River because they both prey on and compete with juvenile salmon.

Harvest Management

Snake River salmon are not directly targeted for harvest, but they are incidentally caught by commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries in the ocean and in the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Incidental harvest of Snake River sockeye salmon and Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon is minimal. However, fall chinook salmon are caught incidentally in commercial and sport fisheries from Southeast Alaska to California, in nontreaty inriver sport and commercial fisheries, and in treaty fisheries above Bonneville Dam. In each of these fisheries, listed Snake River fall chinook are mixed with a number of other natural and hatchery-origin stocks. At present, these fisheries are managed through a complex system of interrelated forums.

The Recovery Plan proposes to amend the existing inriver harvest management rules so that they incorporate explicit management criteria to protect Snake River salmon. To minimize the number of fall chinook caught in ocean fisheries, NMFS proposes to implement a management strategy that is consistent with the Pacific Salmon Commission's objective of meeting adult chinook goals by 1998. These goals are established for a number of stocks and are based on a chinook rebuilding program that was fully implemented in 1984. This approach takes a broad view of stock protection and focuses on the coastwide status of chinook stocks, including those from Puget Sound, the Washington and Oregon coast, and the Columbia River, all of which are under review for listing under the ESA.

Artificial Propagation

Artificial propagation in the Columbia River Basin has contributed successfully to ocean and inriver commercial, sport, and tribal fisheries. In some cases, hatchery production has slowed the decline of natural salmon populations or helped preserve them. However, effects from intensive hatchery production (such as supporting harvest rates in excess of what the natural populations can withstand, using natural fish for hatchery broodstock, and causing introgression into natural gene pools) have also contributed to the continued decline of some natural salmon populations. Ecological interactions between hatchery fish and natural fish such as competition, predation, displacement, and disease transfer need to be minimized.

The Proposed Recovery Plan proposes to conserve remaining Snake River salmon gene pools through captive broodstock, supplementation, and gene bank programs. It also proposes to protect listed species from excessive genetic introgression, minimize impacts on listed salmon resulting from interactions between Columbia River Basin hatchery salmon and natural salmon, improve the quality of fish released from hatcheries, reduce predation and competition interactions between listed salmon and steelhead and hatchery trout, restore listed chinook by reintroducing them to historic habitat, and conduct research for the purpose of optimizing production and conserving natural populations.

Incremental Costs of Recovery Actions

The Proposed Recovery Plan discusses only those incremental costs specifically resulting from actions designed to achieve recovery under the ESA. It does not include the economic and social effects attributable to other authorities and responsibilities. NMFS intends to develop a more complete estimate of the direct costs of the proposed recovery tasks and a better description of the time required to carry out these tasks. There will be opportunity to comment on this supplemental cost and schedule information before NMFS issues a final recovery plan.

In addition to the direct cost information, NMFS and the Team are keenly aware of public interest regarding the potential indirect and socioeconomic costs and benefits of recovery efforts for Snake River sockeye and chinook. The decline of the currently listed stocks and other fisheries in the Columbia River Basin has imposed substantial losses upon the fishery dependent communities and economies of the Pacific Northwest. Implementation of a broad-based recovery effort for Snake River salmon will also inevitably result in some social and economic costs to the Pacific Northwest. Some recovery actions are relatively limited in geographic scope and economic impact, while other actions could trigger changes in the regional economy.

In light of this interest, NMFS asked economists from the University of Washington to reconvene the Snake River Salmon Economic Technical Committee, review the Team's recommendations, and develop an economic analysis of the Team's recommended actions. This analysis is described in the February 1995 report, ''Economics of Snake River Salmon Recovery; a Report to the National Marine Fisheries Service,'' which will be distributed with the Proposed Recovery Plan. NMFS and the Team

believe that this report is a thorough economic evaluation of the Team's recommendations.

No such similarly detailed economic evaluation has yet been conducted for the tasks and objectives contained in this Proposed Recovery Plan. However, many of the Team's recommendations are similar to those NMFS proposes, and the relationship of the Team's recommendations to the NMFS Proposed Recovery Plan tasks is discussed at the end of each chapter or section of this plan. Readers of the Proposed Recovery Plan are encouraged to review Economics of Snake River Salmon Recovery; a Report to the National Marine Fisheries Service.'' A more complete economic analysis of the NMFS Proposed Recovery Plan is under development and will be made available upon completion.

Public Comments Solicited

NMFS intends that the final recovery plan will take advantage of information and recommendations from all interested parties. Therefore, comments and suggestions are hereby solicited from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, industry, and any other person concerned with this Proposed Recovery Plan. Areas on which NMFS would particularly like to receive input include the sections on institutional structure and economics.

Public Hearings

The public hearings are scheduled as follows:

1. May 15, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Lewiston, ID.
2. May 17, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Boise, ID.
3. May 18, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Stanley, ID.
4. May 23, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., LaGrande, OR.
5. May 24, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Richland, WA.
6. May 25, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Astoria, OR.
7. May 31, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Portland, OR.
8. June 6, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Seattle, WA.
9. June 8, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Ketchikan, AK.
10. June 9, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sitka, AK.
11. June 17, 1995, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Columbia Falls, MT.

The hearings will be held at the following locations:

1. Lewiston—City Community Bldg., 1424 Main, Lewiston, ID .
2. Boise—Interagency Fire Center Auditorium, 3905 Vista Ave., Boise, ID 83705.
3. Stanley—Stanley Community Center, Stanley, ID 83278.
4. LaGrande—Eastern Oregon State College, LaGrande, OR 97850.
5. Richland—Richland Federal Bldg., 825 Jadwin Ave., Richland, WA 99352.
6. Astoria—Columbia River Maritime Museum, Astoria, OR 97103.
7. Portland—Federal Complex Auditorium, 911 NE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97232.
8. Seattle—NMFS, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, 2725 Montlake Blvd., East, Seattle, WA 98112.
9. Ketchikan—Civic Center, 888 Venetia Avenue, Ketchikan, AK 99901.
10. Sitka—Centennial Building, 330 Harbor Drive, Sitka, AK 99835.
11. Columbia Falls—Columbia Falls High School, 610 13th Street, Columbia Falls, MT 59912.

Dated: April 12, 1995.

Patricia Montanio,

Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 95–9545 Filed 4–17–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

[I.D. 032895A]

International Whaling Commission; Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: NOAA makes use of a public Interagency Committee (Committee) to assist in preparing for meetings of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). This document sets forth guidelines for participating on the Committee and the date and place of the next meeting.

DATES: The meeting is scheduled for May 8, 1995, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Washington, D.C.

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning this upcoming meeting should be directed to Kevin Chu, Office of International Affairs, Room 14247, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The meeting will be held at the Department of Commerce, Herbert C. Hoover Building (Room 6009), 14th and Constitution, Washington, D.C. 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kevin Chu at (301) 713-2276.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Secretary of Commerce is charged with the responsibility of discharging the obligations of the United States under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, 1946. This authority has been delegated to the Under Secretary of NOAA. The U.S. Commissioner to the IWC has primary responsibility for the preparation and negotiation of U.S. positions on international issues concerning whaling and for all matters involving the IWC. He is staffed by the Department of Commerce, and assisted by the Department of State, the Department of the Interior, the Marine Mammal Commission, and other interested agencies.

Each year, NOAA conducts a series of meetings and other actions to prepare for the annual meeting of the IWC, which is usually held in the spring or summer. The major purpose of these preparatory meetings is to provide for input in the development of policy by members of the public and non-governmental organizations interested in whale conservation. NOAA believes that this participation is important for the effective development and implementation of U.S. policy concerning whaling.

Any person with an identifiable interest in U.S. whale conservation policy may participate in the meetings, but NOAA reserves the authority to inquire about the interest of any person who appears at a meeting and to determine the appropriateness of that person's participation. Foreign nationals and persons who represent foreign governments may not attend. These measures are necessary to promote the candid exchange of information. Such measures are a necessary basis for the relatively open process of preparing for IWC meetings that characterizes current practice.

The 47th Annual Meeting of the IWC will take place from May 22 to June 2, 1995, in Dublin, Ireland. In order to finalize preparations for the 1995 annual meeting, a meeting of the public Interagency Committee has been scheduled for May 8, 1995, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. (see **ADDRESSES**). The first 2 hours of the meeting have been reserved for public review of proposed U.S. position papers. The remaining time will be spent discussing these proposed positions.

Dated: April 11, 1995.

Gary Matlock,

Program Management Officer, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 95–9544 Filed 4–17–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

Notice of Open Meeting

AGENCY: Sanctuaries and Reserves Division (SRD), Office of Ocean and